

issues old and new

There is more to transportation planning than the question of what kind of facility to build and where to put it. The Transportation 2030 planning exercise offers the opportunity to address a number of related “hot topics” with environmental, social equity, economic and other ramifications. Several of the issues listed below first surfaced in the course of developing the predecessor document, the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan. As part of the current Transportation 2030 exercise, the region must decide the level of support for the new thrusts launched three years ago, and whether to further stretch the scope of the long-range plan to address a series of other special needs that have surfaced or been picking up steam in the interim. Also on the radar screen for the first time is the question of setting performance measures for new investments.

Maintenance and Rehabilitation Needs

Debate continues on the appropriate level of regional financial commitment for two basic elements of the region’s transportation infrastructure: maintenance and rehabilitation needs for public transit as well as for local streets and roads. MTC’s current policy provides that 100 percent of the transit capital shortfall be met as a priority investment of the regional transportation plan, but that only the pavement requirements of the Metropolitan Transportation System or MTS (a core network of regional roadways) be fully funded. Transportation 2030 offers a chance to establish a standard for what types of rehabilitation and replacement activities have regional significance and thus will be eligible for regional uncommitted funds.

Lifeline Extended to Low-Income Neighborhoods

Many low-income residents in the Bay Area can’t afford to own and operate one car, let alone the two vehicles that many families consider essential. In recognition of the special needs of this population, MTC defined a preliminary lifeline transportation system that was adopted as part of the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan*. MTC is working on several fronts to advance this commitment, and the Bay Area already has received significant federal support for MTC’s Low-Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) program. As part of Transportation 2030, MTC will need to address funding priorities and options to fill gaps in the lifeline transportation network, either by transit, car sharing or other means.



Air Quality Plan Update

The region's Ozone Attainment Strategy will be updated in spring 2004. It will detail the region's strategy to comply with federal ozone — or smog — standards, and establishes a revised transportation “emissions budget” that identifies allowable levels of pollution from motor vehicles traveling in the Bay Area. The Transportation 2030 Plan must be consistent with the Ozone Attainment Strategy, which is prepared by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Association of Bay Area Governments and MTC; the agencies will coordinate public involvement efforts for both plans.



In future air quality plans, the region also faces the challenge of complying with a new federal eight-hour standard for ozone and a new national requirement to reduce emissions of small particulate matter known as PM 2.5.

Transportation For Livable Communities and Housing Incentives

Transportation programs can do more than just connect places — they can help to strengthen communities. To identify and nurture the kinds of projects that make communities more vibrant and attractive places in which to live and work, MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Program funds community-oriented planning and provides capital grants for project design and construction.

The 2001 Regional Transportation Plan created a complementary Housing Incentive Program (HIP), which rewards cities and counties that encourage developers to provide higher-density housing within walking distance to major transit routes. The 2001 plan also tripled funding for these programs, with a third of the revenues going to counties for locally selected TLC/HIP projects. The Transportation 2030 Plan will address the balance between TLC and HIP funding levels, coordination between regional and local programs, and criteria for regional and local programs.

Crossing Borders: Interregional Partnerships

According to the 2001 *Regional Transportation Plan*, the Bay Area faces a 62 percent jump in trips coming into our region from surrounding counties. The number of commuters who travel to Bay Area jobs from residences outside the nine-county region will continue to rise as a result of the high prices and low production rates for new housing within the Bay Area.

Dealing with this problem will require coordinated analysis and collaboration with neighboring regions—Sacramento to the north, the Central Valley to the east, and the Santa Cruz/Monterey region to the south. Joint investment in transportation improvements for interregional travel corridors is one approach, but equally critical will be future assumptions and plans for housing and employment growth on both sides of the border.

Safety and Security

Safety and security are issues likely to be prominently featured in the next federal transportation legislation, particularly in setting investment strategies for airports, seaports and mass transit systems. In addition, pedestrian safety is a growing local concern. Although pedestrians are involved in only 3 percent of all collisions in California, they account for 20 percent of the fatalities.

In 2002 MTC established the Regional Pedestrian Committee — comprised of pedestrian advocates, planners, traffic engineers, transit operators, public health workers and municipal public works staff. MTC is working with this group to develop better data on pedestrian safety, and to explore a growing menu of techniques to make walking a safe and attractive option for more trips.

Bicycle Plan Identifies Gaps

Bicycling has great potential for serving as a transportation mode for commuting, shopping and running errands. To realize this potential, safe, readily accessible bicycle facilities are needed.

MTC took a step toward this vision with its *Regional Bicycle Master Plan*, which was incorporated into the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan*. The bicycle master plan defines a network of regionally significant bicycle routes and facilities, identifies gaps in the network, and estimates the cost of building out the entire regional network. Identifying sources of revenue for this network is a challenge for the new Transportation 2030 Plan.

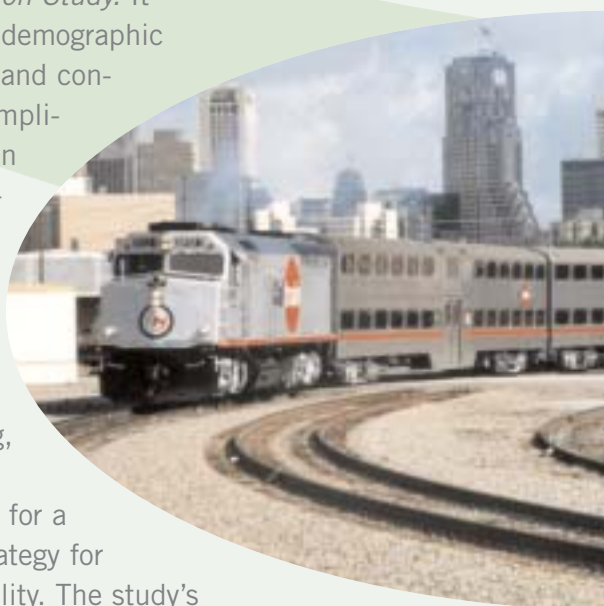
Mobility for Seniors

Anticipating the rapid growth of the senior population in the Bay Area, MTC is looking at ways to improve travel options for older adults — particularly those who cannot or choose not to drive.

In December 2002, MTC completed the *Older Adults Transportation Study*. It documents demographic projections and considers the implications of an aging population for public transit, driving, bicycling and walking, and makes suggestions for a regional strategy for senior mobility. The study's numerous recommendations will be considered in the Transportation 2030 Plan.

Making Connections and Operating the System

Bay Area transportation agencies are working to reduce congestion and boost reliability of the transportation network. Efforts are aimed at improving safety and reducing peak-hour congestion, as well as providing residents with more alternatives to driving alone and more convenient ways to get information. Examples of these programs include a TransLink® universal transit ticket good on all Bay Area transit, the 511 traveler information program, timed traffic signals, FasTrak™ electronic toll collection, and Freeway Service Patrols and call boxes to quickly clear traffic incidents and aid stranded motorists. All these strategies require the cooperation of agencies across jurisdictions and modes of transportation. The Transportation 2030 Plan will consider the need for additional investments in these programs to boost efficiency and connectivity of the Bay Area's transportation system.





Getting Goods to Market

To understand the dynamics and economics of freight movement in the Bay Area, MTC and its partner agencies have launched the Regional Freight Study. The data-collection phase of the study will conclude by July 2003, and will

answer the questions of who moves freight, where it goes and by what method, and how local land-use decisions affect goods movement.

The second phase of the study will identify and prioritize freight movement issues and problems for consideration in Transportation 2030.

Performance Measures

State law requires MTC to adopt performance measures to assess how well new projects and programs identified for funding in the Transportation 2030 Plan will perform in the future to improve transportation conditions. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the selection of new projects for the plan. This is a challenging assignment, given the diverse and potentially large number of new investments that may need to be evaluated.

A joint panel comprised of representatives from MTC's partner agencies and members of an MTC citizen advisory committee have met regularly since early 2003 to meet the state deadline of July 1, 2003, to adopt corridor objectives and performance criteria. Members of the public as well as agencies will be able to submit projects for evaluation, provided the projects meet certain criteria. The results of MTC's evaluation will be available in early 2004 and will be considered in identifying projects for inclusion in the Transportation 2030 Plan.

For more information on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, including public involvement opportunities and the Transportation 2030 Plan, please visit MTC's Web site at <www.mtc.ca.gov> or contact MTC's Public Information Office at 510.464.7787, or <info@mtc.ca.gov>.